

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 NEAE-00 TRSE-00
OMB-01 ACDA-12 /089 W
-----015491 282026Z /45

O R 281931Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2255
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION SINAI
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4212

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS
SUBJ: WEIZMAN GAMBIT APPARENTLY GOING NOWHERE NOW

1. FOLLOWING A BRIEF FLURRY OF SPECULATION AND MEDIA COMMENTARY ON DEFENSE MINISTER WEIZMAN'S CALL FOR A "NATIONAL PEACE GOVERNMENT," THE SUBJECT HAS ALL BUT DISAPPEARED FROM THE PAGES OF THE PRESS. ONLY ONE OR TWO SCATTERED ARTICLES IN YESTERDAY'S PAPERS PERSISTED IN DISCUSSING THE SUBJECT OF A BEGIN RESIGNATION OR DISSOLUTION OF THE COALITION. AL HAMISHMAR, FOR EXAMPLE, (AND NOT SURPRISINGLY) AGAIN CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY TO RESIGN. THE SUBJECT IS HARDLY MENTIONED IN TODAY'S NEWSPAPERS.

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2. INSTEAD, COALITION SPOKESMEN ARE EXUDING UNITY AND UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER. (EVEN WEIZMAN HAS APPEARED TO BE BACKTRACKING BY EMPHASIZING THAT HE CALLED ONLY FOR A BROADENING OF THE GOVERNMENT.) COMING TO BEGIN'S RESCUE HAS BEEN THE IMAGE OF A PRIME MINISTER FACING UP TO AMERICAN PRESSURE. THE CENTERPIECE OF THIS PORTRAYAL IS THE ALLEGATION OF AMERICAN OFFICIALDOM'S

EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BEGIN'S OUSTER. SPECULATION CONTINUES RAMPANT ABOUT WHETHER IN FACT SUCH A STATEMENT WAS MADE AND, IF SO, BY WHOM. THERE IS ALSO GROWING SKEPTICISM OVER WHETHER THE STORY MAY HAVE BEEN A PLANT. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF VERSIONS ON THIS THEME, ONE OF THE MORE PLAUSIBLE BEING THAT THE CHARGE WAS CONCOCTED IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AS SOON AS "SOMEONE CLOSE TO BEGIN" HEARD OF WEIZMAN'S MAARIV INTERVIEW THE DAY BEFORE PUBLICATION.

3. IN SHORT, AS A CHALLENGE TO BEGIN OR EVEN AS A TESTING OF THE WATER, WEIZMAN'S GAMBIT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CHECKED. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT HIS DEFEAT WAS TOTAL; SUBSURFACE DISSENTION REMAINS WITHIN THE COALITION -- BUT WEIZMAN IS NOT A POLITICALLY CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO BEGIN IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE.
LEWIS

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Draft Date: 28 mar 1978
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Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
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Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
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TAGS: PGOV, PINT, IS, (WEIZMAN, EZER)
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